

Shah's Throne of Gold and Diamonds Large as Bird's Eggs May Be War Loot

Vast Accumulation of Precious Loot, in Storage at Teheran, Tempts Belligerents;
Most of It Was Stolen From Delhi.

Rene Bache

WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 24.—It is wholly on the cards that the present war may bring about the disposal of the most wonderful collection of gems and jewels in the world, now the property of Ahmed Mirza, Shah of Persia. His dominions are being fought over by Russians and Turks; and, if the Central Powers win, the Moslems may loot the royal palace at Teheran, and carry off this precious spoil.

Has Throne of Pure Gold.
One item of the treasure is a throne of pure gold, so large that a man could sleep in it comfortably. It is a marvel of the jeweler's art, every part of it being encrusted with diamonds and other precious stones.

Another is a geographical globe three feet in diameter and valued at \$5,000,000. Its entire surface being composed of gems. The seas are made of emeralds; Persia is done in turquoise; England and France in diamonds; and Africa in rubies. In all, the globe contains 513,666 precious stones, together with 75 pounds of gold.

Largest Known Pearl.
Set in the Shah's swordbelt is the largest existing pearl which was sold 250 years ago to the then ruler of Persia for \$100,000. By Tavernier, the famous traveler and gem-collector, a pair of bracelets worn by him on state occasions are adorned with two of the most magnificent diamonds in the world, known respectively as the "Mountain of Light" and the "Sea of Light."

The treasures of this Oriental monarch are of great historical interest, most of them having been derived from the loot of Delhi (in India), when the capital of the Mogul emperors was sacked by the Persians under Nadir Shah, in 1739. The two great diamonds above mentioned were part of the booty carried away, which, valued at \$400,000,000, furnished a fund for 200 elephants.

Conspicuous among the plunder of the Great Mogul's palace was the celebrated Peacock Throne, which, as described by Tavernier, who reckoned its value at \$10,000,000, was of solid gold, inlaid with rubies, emeralds, and diamonds. It was six feet long and four feet wide, and on each side was an umbrella, emblem of Oriental royalty, of crimson velvet embroidered and fringed with pearls; the handles of gold encrusted with gems. Surrounding the back of this wonderful chair of state was a life-size parrot carved from a single emerald.

Two life-size peacocks stood by the throne, one on either side, with tails expanded, the latter, like the bodies and wings of the birds, being inlaid with precious stones of various colors. The chair stood on a block of white marble, preserved in its original place to this day, and on which it still to be depicted the hordes of the Mogul rulers of Hindustan. "If there is a Paradise on earth, it is even this, even this,"

Broken Up By Conqueror.
Unfortunately, the Peacock throne, being too heavy and bulky to be carried away entire, was broken up by the conqueror's orders, nothing of it remains today that is recognizable. On the other hand, quite a number of the very large diamonds that made part of the loot are well known and individually identifiable at the present time, some of them having passed into the hands of various royal families of Europe.

For instance, there is the great diamond known as the "Shah," which is the property of the Russian crown. Nadir Shah, who stole it from Delhi, was assassinated eight years later by four of his palace officers, who hastily appropriated such of his jewels as they

could lay hands on, and fled. One of them was the stone called the "Shah." The murderer to whose portion it fell sought refuge in Afghanistan, and was never heard of again. But, a few years later, it was offered for sale in Baghdad, and eventually it was purchased, for \$250,000, by the empress Catherine II.

The "Orloff" Diamond.
A more famous diamond, the "Orloff," of 194-1/2 carats, now the principal ornament of the Russian scepter, was once the eye of an idol, in a temple on an island in a river, near Trichinopoly, Nadir Shah confiscated it and gave it to one of his generals, who, being sent to govern a province in Afghanistan, wore it in his turban. He was assassinated, and the murderer offered the stone to a native prince. They could not agree on the price, and so the prince, to settle the dispute, had the man strangled.

The prince had the diamond set in his sword-handle. But, not long afterwards, his dominions were invaded by the British, and the sword fell into the hands of a soldier, who sold it to Lord Effingham, then governor General of India. The latter parted with it to a jeweler in Paris, from whom it was purchased by the Russian Prince Orloff.

Orloff had been for years the accepted lover of the most remarkable of women, the empress Catherine II. But he had had a quarrel with his royal mistress, and to make it up with her, he decided to give her the great diamond for which he paid with \$500,000 cash an annuity of \$20,000, and a title of nobility. The stone is the size of a pigeon's egg, but is of Oriental cut, and, if recent as a brilliant, would lose one-fourth of its weight.

Within the last few years two diamonds have been found in South Africa big enough to be described as "chunks" of carbon crystal, one of them, the "Jagersfontein," weighing over seven ounces, while the other, called the "Cullinan," tipped the scales at 19 ounces. The latter, in the rough, had the appearance of a piece of brilliant clear ice. Both were of pure water colorless, but the "Jagersfontein" had a black spot in the middle, and the "Cullinan" was marked by two flaws. Accordingly, the former had to be chopped into two pieces, from the larger of which was cut the "Jubilee," the most magnificent gem ever known. The "Cullinan" was separated into three pieces, the biggest of which, when cut, weighed 686 carats. All five of these monster diamonds are now the property of the British Crown.

Great Mogul As Peace Offering.
Previously, however, the largest diamond ever known was the "Great Mogul," of 785 carats, which was found at the mines of the Nizam of Hyderabad (the famous Colondra diamonds) in 1666. A dealer in jewels named Jemla bought it and gave it as a propitiatory offering to the then Mogul emperor, Shah Jehan. It was about the shape and size of half a hen's egg.

The task of cutting it was assigned to a Venetian lapidary at that time residing in Delhi, and he did the work so badly, reducing the stone to the size of half a nut, with a loss of nearly two-thirds of its weight, that Shah Jehan, instead of paying for the service, fined him the whole of his possessions and threatened to deprive him of his head.

Shah Jehan was succeeded as emperor of Hindustan, or Great Mogul, by his son Aurangzeb, who usurped his throne. The stone was in Aurangzeb's possession when, in 1667, it was seen by Jean Baptiste Tavernier, the traveler, to whose remarkable account of his journeys in the Orient still exist, modern knowledge in the history of many celebrated gems is largely indebted.

The diamond called the "Great Mogul" may be said to have witnessed many dreadful tragedies, including the murder by poison or otherwise of a majority of the princes of the court

of Delhi by their own immediate relatives. It is supposed to have been stolen at the sack of the Mogul capital by Nadir Shah, and to have been broken up to conceal its identity in later events, it disappeared, and since that time nothing has been heard of it.

Tragedy Goes With Big Gem.
The story is intertwined with the history of all the great Oriental diamonds. Most famous of them all is the "Koh-i-noor," the story of which is a long and bloody one. Originally it weighed 182 carats, but it was reduced by clumsy cutting to 116 carats. At the time when Nadir Shah the Persian conqueror, invaded India, the gem belonged to Mohammed Shah, then Great Mogul. Mohammed hid it in his turban, but Nadir, being made acquainted with the fact by a woman of the harem, offered to exchange turban with the defeated monarch as a sign of amity in concluding peace.

In this way he got possession of the diamond. When, eight years later, he was assassinated, the stone passed to his son, Shah Rokh, who succeeded him on the throne of Persia. Shah Rokh was overthrown by a usurper, Aga Mohammed, who tortured him to make him give up the gem. Having put out his eyes with a knife, he ordered his head to be shaved and encased with a diadem of paste, into which boiling oil was poured.

Would Not Give Up Stone.
Even then Shah Rokh would not give up the stone. He died of his injuries, but not before he was released from captivity by Ahmed Shah, founder of the Afghan empire, who came to his assistance. To Ahmed he bequeathed the "Koh-i-noor," which was handed down to Ahmed's grandson, Shah Zaman. The latter was deposed by Shah Shuja, who was his son's stepson, and he tried to force him to surrender the much coveted gem. But Zaman, who had managed to conceal it in his house, hid it in the walls of the wall of the cell he occupied for many years.

An officer of the guard discovered it by the accident of his hand on a projecting angle of the diamond, which thus passed into Shuja's possession. Shuja, however, was soon deposed, and his eyes were put out by Shah Mahmud. Escaping from prison, he fled to the court of Rundi Singh, who, in a spirit of Oriental hospitality, persecuted him and started his wife until he consented to give up the "Koh-i-noor."

Rundi had the stone set in a bracelet, which he constantly wore. But it was confiscated at the end of the great mutiny by the British, and sent to England, where it is now in the crown jewels. It is a personal possession of the ruler of Great Britain. Its value is estimated at \$500,000, though it is not of fine water, being slightly greenish in color.

In view of the remarkable stories here related, it will be understood why the native princes and potentates of India, even to this day, make a practice of hiding treasures. The habit has come down to them from their ancestors, and from times when there was no account of the modern property being ever safe from capture and confiscation. Thus even the poor in that country bury or otherwise conceal their savings.

—BY—
Frank G. Carpenter

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Alaskan Big Game Tempts U. S. Hunters; Government Plans to Prevent Slaughter

Thousands of Caribou, Bears That Weigh a Ton Each, Mountain Sheep and Giant Moose Abound in Frozen North Territory.

ONE, Alaska, Feb. 24.—With the opening of the new government railway a horde of big game hunters will rush to Alaska. They will swarm over the Kenai peninsula after giant moose and the great brown bear, they will chase the caribou over the Tanana valley, and will climb the Alaska range to kill mountain sheep and goats. They will even make excursions to Mount McKinley, and some may go farther north to hunt the mighty walrus and polar bear.

The government is already preparing for the invasion. It has enacted stringent laws as to the open seasons for certain animals, and it has in view the creation of great game preserves, one

of which is to surround Mount McKinley. As it is now, every non-resident of Alaska is required to pay from \$50 to \$100 to hunt in the territory, and without an additional payment he cannot kill moose south of latitude 62. He has to have a special license for moose, and this costs \$150.

Hunter Is Limited.
Moreover, the hunter is limited as to the number of animals he may kill, and even the residents cannot ship out the meat of the animals, or their heads as trophies, without a shipping license from the government of Alaska. It will cost him \$10 to export the moose, and he can send four deer, two caribou, two sheep, two goats and two brown bears for \$15. The law forbids hunting of game animals with dogs or the use of shotguns larger than those of a number ten gauge.

The open season varies in different parts of the country. North of latitude 62 a brown bear may be killed at any time, and moose, caribou and sea lions from August 1 to December 10. Walrus may be killed from July 1, and grouse, ptarmigan and other birds from September 1 to March 1.

Two Moose a Year Is Limit.
It is unlawful for any person, in any one year, to kill more than two moose, one walrus or sea lion, three caribou, three mountain sheep, three brown bears or eight deer; and he must not have in his possession on any one day more than 25 grouse or ptarmigan.

On the Kenai peninsula, the region that is the heart of the great moose country, it is now necessary to have a license guide, and it will cost from \$5 to \$10 a day for the time he employs. The guides may be either white men or Indians; they are appointed by the governor, and their names are published. They are subject to the governor and to the game wardens, who watch to see that the laws are kept. The penalty for infraction of the hunting regulations is a fine of \$200 or imprisonment for not more than three months, or both.

Plan to Preserve Game.
The stringent hunting regulations are necessary to the preservation of the game of Alaska, and already the government has had to make the killing of certain animals in certain territories from time to time. It is now prohibited to shoot moose in southeastern Alaska, and it was only lately that the restriction on caribou in the Kenai peninsula was abolished. This is so notwithstanding the fact that parts of Alaska are almost as numerous as were the buffalo on our western plains.

It is estimated that there are still several millions of these animals on the barren lands of the far north. They live there in the summer and go southward in great herds for the winter. Two or three years ago a drove of 30,000 came within a mile of Dawson and fed there on the hills. Men went out to see them in automobiles and great numbers were killed. The animals did not seem to be afraid of the automobiles and even the automobiles did not create a stampede.

About 100 miles from Fairbanks is a high known as Porcupine Dome, where, as the hunters say, the caribou of that region come together to start south in companies. In drove after drove of thousands and make their way to the headwaters of the rivers. They stay south during the winter, and along in February and March begin to make their way back in bands of 100 or so.

Nature's Cold Storage.
Caribou are still so far south as the Lynn canal over 1000 miles from their summer home in the far north. In 1915 a drove of more than 40,000 passed south, crossing the Klondike valley about 25 miles from Dawson, and 600 were killed for the winter food supply of that city. The caribou were dressed and left out in the air. They froze within a short time, and the natural cold storage conditions were such that they were kept until used.

During my stay in Dawson I had a talk with Commissioner Vail, an expert of the territory, who, like Nimrod, is a "mighty hunter." He described a caribou herd which he saw on a recent trip to the sixty mile north of the Klondike valley and high mountains on either side swarmed with the

Romance!

NATHAN HALE.

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